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TILLERS OF THE SAND

BEING A FITFUL RECORD OF

THE ROSEBERY ADMINISTRATION

FROM THE TRIUMPH OF LADAS TO THE DECLINE AND FALL-OFF

BY

OWEN SEAMAN

AUTHOR OF

'HORACE AT CAMBRIDGE' AND 'WITH DOUBLE PIPE'

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1895

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THESE desultory sets of verse, written from time to time in illustration of various episodes in Lord Rosebery's late Administration, have, with one exception, been already in print: the majority in 'The National Observer,' four in 'The World,' two in 'Punch.' I have to acknowledge the courtesy of the editors of 'The National Observer' and 'The World' in allowing me to reprint work that has appeared in their pages. For permission to use the two poems from 'Punch' I wish to thank Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co., more especially that in the case of one of the poems they have made an exception to their rule requiring a fixed interval of time before republication.

O. S.

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DISSOLVING VIEWS

(A RADICAL MANIFESTO)

INTELLIGENT Electorate !

I come commended by the Caucus ;
Their notion was that in debate
My voice would prove extremely raucous ;
I naturally like to mention
My leading claim on your attention.

Far be it from me, I may add,
To underrate my private merits,
But as a fact the Caucus had
To burrow like a lot of ferrets,
And simply wriggle all they knew
To raise a candidate for you.

You pardonably drop a hint
That I should answer certain questions,
And put, if possible, in print
Some rough and tentative suggestions
To indicate our future rôle
In case we conquer at the poll.

I understand our noble Chief
Would have the Peers annihilated;
Another batch, we note with grief,
Has recently been elevated;
Why *does* he crown his own connection
Before he scalps the whole collection?

'Down with the Union Jack!' says John;
'Down with the Church!' says Asquith; 'that'll
Be found a useful malison
To yell along the line of battle;'

Amid the common shout for slaughter
Sir Wilfrid faintly calls for Water.

Apart from this portentous list,
So damnatory and seductive,
We ought to meet the Unionist
With schemes a little more constructive ;
At times the best of agitators
Are bound to pose as legislators.

We all possess dissolving views ;
You pine, no doubt, to pinch your neighbours,
To rob the honest rich, and use
The fruit of other people's labours ;
Expect me shortly on the spot,
I'll gladly undertake the lot.

THE PROMISE OF LADAS.

WHO names this colt? What eponym
Stands sponsor for his morals?
I, Ladas, large and lithe of limb,
Lord of a hundred laurels!
On whom the loud Olympic ring,
Ignoring local squabbles
And every other mortal thing,
Sat tight, and planked their obols.

Parsley and olive, palm and bay—
Without exaggeration
I take it that I bore away
A positive plantation;

Till Elis saw me pass the post
By just a bare priority,
And send my gallant, breathless ghost
To join the great majority.

He, too, has joined their fighting ranks,
The heir to my tradition ;
All on the downs his glossy flanks
Defy the Opposition ;
Sound as his owner's chosen make
Of Government despatch-box,
Exploding prophecies that stake
Their safety on a *Matchbox*.

As Myron set me up in bronze,
To make my parish vainer,
May he through fortune's pros and cons
Set up (in tin) his trainer ;

So may he, like the knowing ox,
Adorn his master's crib and
Avoiding spavins on his hocks
Take back the Turf's blue riband !

Go on, my noble king of steeds !
Go on, *virtute macte !*
Prime minister to all their needs
Who went and freely backed 'ee ;
And if there's really something in
Success that fans infection,
Who knows but what a triple win
Will turn the next election ?

Punch, May 19, 1894.

WRIT IN WATER

[Mr. Chamberlain quoted to the House from a letter of his hon. friend Sir W. Lawson to Mr. Whyte, Secretary of the United Kingdom Alliance, on the prospects of the Government Liquor Traffic (Local Control) Bill, in which he had said that Lord Rosebery declared the Temperance men to be the backbone of the Liberal Party. (Laughter.) 'Remember,' ran the letter, 'how gallantly Sir William Harcourt, who takes charge of the Bill, has nailed his colours to the mast.']

WHEN the Chief of the Exchequer
Had relieved his mental pecker
(He's the Champion we casually slight),
From the right-hand seat beside me
Some one ventured to deride me
For a letter that I wrote to Mr. Whyte.

It would seem that my effusions
Often bristle with allusions
To the victory of Water and the Right ;
For it is my joy to see to
The success of Local Veto,
And I clearly said the same to Mr. Whyte.

Clearly told my gentle reader
That our battle-breathing Leader
Was in admirable fettle for the fight ;
That he'd sport the true-blue riband,
Quaff a rousing Cocoa Nib, and
Rally round the ranks of me and Mr. Whyte.

Though the ship of State were leaking,
He would--nautically speaking

Nail our colours to the masthead, trim and tight ;
And desert the sorry pennants
Of the late Evicted Tenants
(Though I kept the latter dark from Mr. Whyte).

Nay, the Premier in hearty
Terms had hinted that our party
Was his 'backbone,' and a source of much delight :
But he's either dislocated,
Or become invertebrated,
Since I quoted the above to Mr. Whyte.

It may be the rise in whisky
Made the Bill a little risky,
In the case of ardent spirits feeling spite ;
And our publicans and sinners,
Like the best of Derby winners,
Might have rounded on myself and Mr. Whyte.

I am not, of course, a racer,
I have never found it pay, sir,
But I'm bound to own a sort of sense of blight,
Since the sad Eclipse of Ladas
Caused the Liberal hopes to fade as
Fade the leaves—of letters sent to Mr. Whyte.

Once our cause was fairly in it,
'Growing stronger every minute'—
That's the phrase that I selected to indite;
Now it's weak as toast and water,
Though perhaps I didn't oughter
Name a beverage beloved of Mr. Whyte.

When our Head demurely mentions
His proverbial intentions,

And observes in language really rather trite,
That it still will be his pleasure
To 'push forward' with the measure,
Why, we beg to doubt it, don't we, Mr. Whyte?

I dislike to be facetious,
But I think the promise specious,
And I say a party cuts a sorry sight,
Straining every other jack bone
With a jelly for its 'backbone,'
Which is what we've been reduced to, Mr. Whyte.

National Observer, July 28, 1894.

A LITANY IN TIME OF NEED

(Evicted Tenants Bill)

FROM the pestilent, privy sedition
Whose hand is at honesty's throat,
From the bane of a Party's ambition
Whose soul is on sale for a vote ;
From the snare of the impudent fowler,
From treachery sharper than swords,
From the latest political howler—
Defend us, good Lords !

From a Ministry's dodge that is drastic
For gagging the gorge of dissent,
From the Leaguers whose law is elastic
On rent and the paying of rent ;

From the rule that the wretches who do so
Be badgered by boycotting hordes,
Crying 'Ho ! for O'Brien his trousseau !'—
Defend us, good Lords !

When integrity proves suicidal,
And honour is seared with a brand ;
When the labour on land that is idle
Is known as the grabbing of land ;
When a curse is on faithful endeavour,
And Parliament keeps its rewards
For the breach of a bond—then, if ever,
Defend us, good Lords !

From the scheme for a national bounty
Releasing America's dole
Broadcast over borough and county,
To sweeten the path to the poll ;

From irregular raising of riches
To amplify alien hoards
By the broaching of Englishmen's breeches—
Defend us, good Lords !

From the sham elegiacs of mealy-
Mouthed agents of Ireland's woes,
From the efforts of Timothy Healy
To sever the shamrock and rose,
From the scare that the Government gave us
When loyalty went by the boards—
You have saved us already, O save us
Now also, good Lords !

Such a grace we will gladly remember
When Radical talkers renew
The design for a Fifth of November
Exclusively levelled at you ;

For the nation will never dishonour
A debt that she duly records,
And, if asked, she will take it upon her
To save you, my Lords!

National Observer, August 18, 1894.

THE BITTER CRY OF THE PRIVATE MEMBER

O WALY, waly, up the House !
And waly, waly, down again !
And waly for the butchered Bills,
The little Bills we backed in vain !
I leaned my weight unto an oak
—This venerable plant is here
Put for a Ministerial pledge—
It broke : the shock was most severe.

It's not the dearth of holidays,
Though they have been extremely few ;
Nor yet the wicked waste of time,
Though this is irritating too ;

It's not the ventilation of
The House, though that is rather crude ;
What really hurts a Member's health
Is Ministers' ingratitude.

O promises are mighty fine,
And fine the flattery of whips,
But when you reach the net result
'Tis but a windy meal of pips ;
O wherefore did I plank my vote
For grist to yonder Party mill?
For now my Leader lets me down
And suffocates my little Bill.

When we came in by London town
Our hearts were high with hope and joy ;
Some of us wore the tartan kilt,
And some the hardy corduroy ;

We played the crofter's reel and sang
The coster's dirge of discontent ;
And when we piped the Party danced,
And when we mourned they made lament.

But now that we have saved the game,
And served the Session's public need,
Whether we pipe, or mourn, or both,
They simply pay no sort of heed ;
But had we guessed our private quest
Would end in such a sickly sell,
A dozen of us might have struck
And sent the Budget Bill to h——.

Now Arthur's seat I'll sit behind,
Carouse with ever-flowing Bowles,
And simulate the 'busy bee'
With other transmigrating souls ;

I'll wave the rebel rag of Weir,
  Roost in the wild Macgregor's 'cave,'
Go pander to the Parnellite,
  And generally misbehave.

O waly, waly, up the House!
  And waly, waly, down again
(I've used the phrase before, and still
  The meaning's very far from plain)!
For O, if my true little Bill
  Were yet alive, and looking fit!
But now it's in the common grave,
  Green grass already over it.

National Observer, August 25, 1894.

SOMNUS AGRESTIUM ;

OR, THE BORE'S DREAM

Upon the unnumbered sand he lay,
Where airs of ozone blow ;
His suit was one of Paisley spun,
His hat was soft and low ;
In the shadow of sleep he traced again
The Season's torpid flow.

Along the vista of his dreams
The Lower House appeared ;
Beneath a tile of the beaver's pile
His comely head he reared ;
The Government was on its feet ;
The Party faintly cheered.

Again he saw his martial chief
Address the stolid mace,
Inserting tags of Latin gags
With elephantine grace ;
The Rads employed their mother tongue,
And mocked him to his face.

Then in the nick of question time
Himself adroitly rose ;
Each word that he said came down like lead
Upon his Leader's toes :
(A tear escaped the sleeper's eye
And trickled down his nose).

Before him like a hunted thing
He harried Bryce at bay ;
Then changed the scene to Argentine
And drew Sir Edward Grey ;

Or sauntered round the crofters' huts,
And showed Sir George the way.

Now fast and far to Kaffir-land
His eagle flight he bent ;
Then luffed about and trotted out
The claims of Welsh dissent ;
While in the nobles' gallery
The Bishops came and went.

With rare *aplomb* he played the part
Of truant Labouchere ;
Lashed at the Lords with knotted cords,
And chaffed the patient Chair ;
From sultry noon to dewy eve
He never turned a hair.

Though any single innings was
Comparatively short,

His total *coup* amounted to
Three columns of report :
(For joy he shifted in his sleep
And gave a happy snort.)

No fear he felt of wary Whips,
But made them sick with fright ;
The People's Choice, he raised his voice
To put the nation right ;
By day he figured in the *Sun*,
And in the *Star* by night.

Ah ! balmy sleep that thus obscures
With kindly irony
The very uncouth and naked truth
That he was born to be
Plainly a public nuisance or
A pure nonentity.

National Observer, September 8, 1894.

BEATUS ILLE QUI PROCUL NEGOTIIS

HAPPY the Member that with work in hand
Blithely and buoyantly neglects the same,
Says that the Opposition is to blame,
Discourses of the Upper Chamber, and
Proceeds with airy conscience to vacate.
Remote from toil a peace inviolate
Broods o'er his jocund head with halcyon spell;
For him no dissonant division bell
Upon an awful sudden sounds the fate
Of his proleptically tepid soup;
No longer curling round his lissome flanks
The Party Whip adjusts him to the ranks;
No more he hears the gathering war-whoop--

MacGregor for the Clans ! Redmond for Clare !
Burns for the Masses ! Barclay for the rest !—
Shake the astonied gangway. Balmy air
Breathes on his brow precisely as supplied
To people in the Islands of the Blest ;
Ripe Autumn courts him on the countryside
Immersed in mildly innocent pursuits ;
There tickles he the ravenous pike, or shoots
A pheasant ere his season ; plucks amain
The pullulating vintage ; lightly sings
Snatches of some sweet topical refrain ;
Smokes freely ; does, in fact, a lot of things
Indicative of pure domestic bliss.
  Nor any evil serpent enters this
Primeval Paradise, save only when
He gathers from the fatuous morning mails
Rumour of one Lloyd-Jonah fearfully,
Down in the deep interior of Wales,

Cursing the bishoprics of Nineveh ;
Or haply hears from wild Hibernian parts
The rattle of shillelaghs on the breeze,
Blent with the throbbing of United Hearts ;
Thanks God devoutly he is not as these,
And prays to be delivered from his friends.
And there are passing moments when he rends
His hair, revolving darkly in his head
What Duties he shall render, being dead.
Even thus in fitfully heroic rhyme
I meditated, standing at the time
Upon the Bridge of Westminster by night
(A matter of some two and ninety years
Since Wordsworth made remarks upon the site),
And deemed my thoughts too fine and large for tears ;
And so would anyone except his breast
Were hardened to the texture of a brick.
I pictured those who, reckless of arrears,

Being of work deferred now deadly sick,
Reaped, as above, or otherwise, their rest ;
Who drank the waters, took a turn or so
Of easy ambulation on the piers ;
And ceased about the body politic
To care one little solitary blow.
Thames much as usual sauntered to the deep ;
Big Ben observed the quarters ; overhead
The beacon-light was off ; the mace to bed
Had long ago majestically passed ;
Great Scott ! the House of Commons was asleep,
And all its Members wide awake at last !

National Observer, September 22, 1894.

ALLIES IN BLUNDERLAND

(*With apologies to Mr. Lewis Carroll*)

'You are old, Father William,' the young William said ;
'We have ceased to accept your advice ;
And yet on our corns you repeatedly tread ;
Do you think that your conduct is nice ?'

'In my season, Sir William,' the Ancient replied,
'I was chary of venting my views ;
But now that I'm out of the swim of the tide
I have done, and shall do, as I choose.'

Said Sir William, 'Of old with the Emerald pack
You would hunt like a man and a brother :
How is it they've come to a cheque on the track,
And are having a brush with each other?'

'In my prime,' said the Ancient, 'I owed 'em a grudge
And my feelings were deadly to stifle ;
But now that I care not a fig or a fudge,
Why, I thought I would pay 'em a trifle.'

'On the question of Liquor,' Sir William observed,
'Our scheme was erratic, I grant ;
But why from that scheme have you suddenly swerved,
And protested the thing was a plant?'

'In the days of my office,' the Ancient explained,
'I would wink for the ghost of a vote ;
But now that there's nothing on earth to be gained,
I have said—well, you saw what I wrote.'

'Just another conundrum, and then I have done—
Notwithstanding your recent reaction,
I trust you are still to be counted as one
Of the famous Gladstonian faction?'

'There is wisdom in years,' was the Ancient's reply;
'And I solemnly hope, if you're spared,
You will cut the connection yourself by-and-by;
You would do it at once, if you dared!'

National Observer, October 6, 1894.

QUIETA NON MOVERE

Of Music Halls let others rant,
And join the pestilential quarrel,
And glibly answer cant with cant
As maudlin if not quite so moral;

Let others, veiled in pseudonyms
Go pounding on the quest Quixotic
Of novel women's ways and whims,
Half celibate and half erotic;

And urge a privilege that is
Neither original nor recent,
Seeing that most democracies
Have claimed the right to be indecent;

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And join the pestilential quarrel,
And glibly answer cant with cant
As maudlin if not quite so moral ;

Let others, veiled in pseudonyms
Go pounding on the quest Quixotic
Of novel women's ways and whims,
Half celibate and half erotic ;

And urge a privilege that is
Neither original nor recent,
Seeing that most democracies
Have claimed the right to be indecent ;

Let others swallow day by day
The last irrefutable story
Of Weh and Yeh, and Japs 'wha hae,'
And battles singularly gory;

And lick their lips and magnify
The growth of European custom,
Judging of Eastern culture by
Torpedoes and the skill to bust 'em;—

For me, aweary, I confess,
Of all the newest things in humour,
Wars, wine and women, art and dress,
The latest rage, the latest rumour—

How sweet to rest a breathing-while
Remote from latter-day disputings,
Bradford, beneath thy honoured pile,
And hear the Premier's dulcet flutings!

And feel that I may rock my brain
With music of familiar numbers,
That nothing like a novel strain
Will be allowed to wreck my slumbers.

'Down with the Lords ! Down with the Lords !'
I find the harmless iteration
Soothing as some old harpsichord's
Indifferently dull vibration ;

And while he tunes with easy tact
His venerable τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο,
Just how the blessed thing's to act
I know he knows no more than I know.

National Observer, November 3, 1894.

PHILADELPHIA; OR, BROTHERLY LOVE

AIR—*Off to Philadelphia*

THE 'Nation' met in Rutland Square,
The rival tickets all were there
To hear the manifesto of McCarthy,
For throughout the recent ructions
He had issued no instructions
For the guidance of the Parliamentary Parthy.

In re the late lamented Whip's
And other Governmental tips,

The Chairman he protested *vi et arte*
That he never had a notion
That the same would cause emotion
In the bosom of the Parliamentary Party.

Though some were spoiling for a fight,
He hoped sincerely that they might
Appear to be unanimous and hearty,
Or there wouldn't be a vestige
Of the old peculiar prestige
Like a halo round the Parliamentary Party.

No doubt they would be glad to hear
The Paris funds were floating clear,
And now, with stock in hand on which to start, he
Would demand a revolution
In the British Constitution
From the puppets of the Parliamentary Party.

Fair Fortune all across her face
Was smiling on the Celtic race
From Kerry to the crofters of Cromárty,
And the scene would still be brighter
If the gentle dynamiter
Could be free to join the Parliamentary Party.

. . . . . .

This much they tell, but fail to tell
Just how the swift shillelaghs fell,
What coats were trailed about *civili Marte;*
For *in camerâ obscurâ*
They had managed to insure a
Privy audit for the Parliamentary Party.

National Observer, November 17, 1894.

THE RECORDING ANGEL, EX-M.P.

[Had the appointment of Mr. Waddy, Q.C., to the Recordership of Sheffield been postponed a month, the New Register would then have come into force at the Brigg election, with the result that the Liberal candidate would have been returned.—*Radical Press.*]

BRING on the weeping willow,
Wave cypress branches, wave,
And pump a tearful billow
Above the hero's grave ;
Mix, mix the mournful toddy,
And join the wakers' jig,
In memory of Waddy
Q.C. and late of Brigg.

O Waddy ! how we miss you !
We never knew your worth
Until the fatal issue
Of your ascent from earth ;
Your passing, as is patent,
Has brought about a big
Suttee of all the latent
Electorate of Brigg.

Long years have we been yearning
To utilise our list
Of occupiers burning
To have their babies kissed ;
Emancipate and eager,
The fresh, full-bottomed Whig,
Next month had crushed the leaguer
And raised the siege of Brigg.

Like Tam o'Shanter's filly,
We might have fought it out,
And borne our 'chapman billie'
Beyond the demon rout;
And forward stoutly straining,
With never an unpolled twig
Of all our tail remaining,
Have won the blessed Brig.

Oh, could you but have waited
One little month at most,
And then been elevated
To that distinguished post,
Our new Recording Angel,
Light-hearted as a grig,
Might then have said 'The change 'll
Be barely felt at Brigg.'

Think not we grudge the glory
They deemed your proper due,
We merely grudge the Tory
The place that breathes of you ;
And so above your body
A tumulus we dig,
And wail the loss of Waddy
Q.C. and late of Brigg.

National Observer, December 15, 1894.

ENTRE NOEL ET LE JOUR DE L'AN

Entre Noël et le Jour de l'An

The oracles are mostly dumb ;
Still is the hustings' rataplan
And still the stumper's hideous hum ;
The time invites to eat and drink,
And in the intervals to think.

The statesman's studied repartee
Is lightly laid upon the shelf ;
Even the Earl of Rosebery
Refuses to commit himself ;
And having nothing now to say
Has nothing to explain away.

The blessed reign of Santa Claus,
  Symbolic of Domestic Love,
Impels the Radical to pause
  From roaring like a sucking-dove :
A mild and momentary cheer
Resuscitates the panting Peer.

Under the common holly's leaf
  Late foemen fatten cheek by jowl,
The Parish Councils big with beef,
  The Vestries full of Turkey-fowl ;
One equal appetite elates
Progressivists and Moderates.

All party factions pale their fires,
  Obedient to Christian law ;

Unmitigated calm inspires
The universal British maw ;
And occupies that ample breast
That slumbers in the New Forest.

National Observer, December 29, 1894.

EXUL REDUX

[Sir William Harcourt has returned from the New Forest to his residence in Downing Street.—*Universal Press.*]

WELCOME back from the wilds, O immaculate hermit,
To regions where sin and society meet;
Welcome back from your shady (if so I may term it)
Retreat.

Far away in the Forest we feel you have rambled
Through places where natural objects abound;
With the deer you have coursed, with the rabbits have gambolled
Around.

You have shown an indifference simply sublime to
Affairs that concern the domain of the Guelph,
And have had an improving and nice little time to
Yourself.

You have wandered divinely aloof, independent
Of paltry political ructions and things,
Like an Exile from Erin, a kingly descendant
Of Kings.

Peradventure if faint but intelligent rumours
Have reached you of Rosebery stumping the state,
You have grimly remarked on the fatuous humours
Of fate :

Have observed how his lordship has lately projected
His foot into matters that fitted him ill,
Not to mention the buskins that *you* were expected
To fill.

Yet the blast of your voice has been hushed to a chirrup,
Your armour reduced to the semblance of silk;
And the wine of your wrath mitigated with syrup
Or milk.

We have sighed for the shafts of your wit and the cunning
That drew the long bow in the time of your need;
But your laurels like casual chaff have been running
To seed.

Yes, afar from the fighting, in stately and still ease,
Unmelted of flattery, deaf to dissent,
You have kept in the recognised mode of Achilles
Your tent.

There are murmurs of mutiny openly boasting,
The scent of sedition is borne on the breeze,
Even under our nostrils the Welsher is toasting
His cheese.

O arise from your rest, for our foes are defiant
And half of our comrades are kicking their heels ;
Sally forth like a thundering god or a giant
On wheels.

National Observer, January 12, 1895.

LOWER CHAMBER CONCERT

(BOOK OF WORDS ONLY)

First Voice.

I HAVE thought that the Session should rightly begin
By a sort of a Radical blast;
By a Bill that should threaten perdition and shame
To an order of things with a glorious name,
With a sacred and national past.

And I said, 'I will go for Religion in Wales,
And in future the title to grace
Shall be kept for Dissenters and Druids and such—
I refer to the people whose tongue is in touch
With the luminous speech of the race'

Cabinet Chorus.

If *any* scheme deserves to win
Our whole and sole attention,
It is the scheme embodied in
The little Bill you mention.

Second Voice.

I admit that the Welsher is down on the fold
In proportions of fifteen to one,
Having voted for things that he felt were accurst
Till the skin of his conscience is tending to burst,
And his merits are second to none;

But I plead for the claims of the Land of the League
Where another Commission has sat;

Though the sides of the question were properly two,
The Commission adopted a different view ;
I've a Bill that is based upon that.
Chorus : If *any* scheme, &c.

Third Voice.

There is joy in the breach of a personal bond,
But a breach in the State is the best ;
So I stickle for going the integral hog,
And exploding the Union that lies like a log
On the pit of the Liberal chest.
Chorus : If *any* scheme, &c.

Fourth Voice.

By the way, we have heard that the Party is ripe
(If not rotten) enough for a blow

Of a nature to act as a ram-catapult,
And demolish the Chamber above, and result
In a Chamber of Horrors below.

Chorus: If *any* scheme, &c.

Fifth Voice.

I've a novel design that enables a man
(And the order is temptingly tall)
To determine, as best he may happen to think,
What and where, and how often, his neighbour may drink,
Or indeed whether ever at all.

Chorus: If *any* scheme, &c.

Sixth to Tenth Voices.

There are matters aloof from ephemeral strife
That we cannot conceivably chuck,
That affect to its vitals the life of the land,
Such as Toy Locomotives, and Aldermen, and
Registration and Oysters and Truck!

Chorus.

If *any* schemes deserve to win
Our whole and sole attention,
They are the schemes embodied in
The little Bills you mention.

National Observer, February 9, 1895.

SHIFTING SANDS

(THROUGH THE HOUR-GLASS)

AIR—*The sun was shining on the sea*

THE chief was sitting in his place,
Sitting with all his might ;
He did his very best to keep
His banner out of sight ;
And this was odd when he was in
The middle of the fight.

J. R. was fuming sulkily ;
He thought the bloody fray

Had got no business to proceed
Another blessed day,
Unless the army chose to own
That Erin blocked the way.

The House was full as full could be,
The leaders sick as sick ;
They threw a little dirt about,
In hope that some would stick ;
They also backed a heap of bills ;
They often go on tick.

The Asquith and the Labouchere
Were looking round the land,
The former laughed aloud to see
Such quantities of sand ;
'If we could plough it up a bit,'
He said, 'it *would* be grand !

'If all the Party in a row
Ploughed it for half a year,
I wonder if it would affect
A solitary Peer.'
'I doubt it,' said the Radical,
And smiled from ear to ear.

'Still, *if* you think the ploughing might
Annoy the Landed Class,
My little lot will lend itself
To bring the scheme to pass;
I call it fairly asinine,
But—"write me down an ass!"'

'The time has come,' the Asquith said,
'To talk of bogus bills;
Of Welsh dissent and questions like
The cure of Tenants' ills;

And whether Mr. Morley knows
Of any patent pills.

'We thank you therefore very much
For being really nice,
And kindly promising to play
The ass at any price.'
'I don't see where the oyster beds
Come in,' said Mr. Bryce.

National Observer, February 23, 1895.

THE BATTLE OF LONDON

AIR—*Hohenlinden*

ON London, where the gas was low,
And still as winter was the flow
Of water-companies that go
On piling money rapidly,

The counters counting up the votes—
This side the sheep, and that the goats—
Were making speculative notes
On what the net result would be.

But London saw another scene
When those that hate the happy mean
Were gathered round the fatal screen
To welcome their majority ;

That sight was better than a play –
The Radical *Hetæria*
All in their caravanserai,
And ripe for any revelry !

But when the tape began to click,
The sanguine body politic
Became incontinently sick,
And cursed aloud Progressively ;

And watching half the weary night
The swift recording demon write
The list of fallen in the fight,
A sorry tale of twenty-three,

They said it was a marvel that
A pampered Proletariat
Should treat the labelled Democrat
As if he were the enemy.

But in the subsequent debate
They made as if to mock at fate ;
The language was Immoderate,
It also was extempore.

But fuller yet the bitter bowl,
When Monday gave the perfect poll,
And Wandsworth bells began to toll
O'er Dickinson his sepulchree.

Save, Hutton, half thy banners, save
For winding-sheets to wrap the brave !
And let Sir George above their grave
Lift up his wail Tit-Bitterly.

But as for Johnny, by-and-by,
He'll talk to those that wiped his eye,
And then, my word, there'll be a high
Auld 'nicht wi' Burns' in Battersea!

National Observer, March 9, 1895.

DISCRETA SEDES

By what is technically called 'to-day'
They will perhaps have settled on a Speaker;
If so, the thing or two I had to say
Is bound to be proportionately weaker;
It is a little galling to the mind
To cut a thoughtful and prophetic caper,
And get the wrong result a day behind;
But that's the beauty of a weekly paper.

Under the circumstances I prefer
To make reflections rather than to prophesy;
And let me say that it would not occur
To *me* to seek the post; it is an office I

Consider full of dignity and grace,
But then there's precious little else to show for it ;
And when you come to think about the case
It's odd that such a lot of people go for it.

To sleep ! perchance to eat ! You must allow
These blessings are a natural tradition ;
A really healthy creature like a cow
Will often do the two in one position ;
But though his need be exquisitely sore,
A Speaker cannot properly do either,
At any rate from three to twelve (or more)
He barely gets the semblance of a breather.

Through all the drowsy boredom of debates
He still must keep a counterfeit composure,
Look callous when a person perorates,
And know precisely when to put the closure ;

For each enigma have its fit reply,
  Weigh well his judgment lest it prove erroneous,
Give every man his ear and some his eye,
  And do his duty by the late Polonius.

Through oratory seldom quite sublime
  He shows, as I observed, a mild urbanity,
Says 'Order ! order !' at the proper time,
  And checks the Government from mere profanity ;
He has to know his precedent by rote,
  Distinguish when the Serjeant should be sent for,
Do anything except record his vote—
  The only thing a Member's rightly meant for.

All which considered, were the choice my own,
  I'd have my dearest enemy appointed ;
There was indeed a rumour faintly blown
  Suggesting that Sir William be anointed ;

By blood a Prince, he knows the regal art ;
That chair would be his throne, and he the soul of it ;
And while another man might fill the part,
I'm fairly certain *he* would fill the whole of it !

There are that look, but luckily in vain,
For him, the Unforgotten-of-the-million,
The Grander, Older, Man to come again
Like Arthur from the shadows of Avilion ;
While others ask, by Justice with the scales,
Why Englishmen should be the only starters ;
Is this a further slight to gallant Wales,
And yet another knock for Erin's martyrs ?

I rather fancy some heroic shape,
All swollen with a patriot's emotion,
Our own Alpheus or the cultured Snape
To represent the Mistress of the Ocean ;

And if he were a Member, I surmise
The Ministry would have another rank lark,
And enter Mr. Redford for the prize
In view of his experience as a bank clerk.

National Observer, March 23, 1895.

A COCK AND BULL STORY

AIR—*Casabianca*

['European navies were like fighting cocks, armed to the teeth; a single spark might cause an explosion.'—*Dr. MacGregor on the Navy Estimates.*]

THE fighting cock stood on the deck,
His eye was rolling red,
His feathers whiffled round his neck,
His crest was on his head.

He wore his spur above his heel,
His claws were underneath,
He also had a mass of steel
Plate armour on his teeth.

Meanwhile the House was haggling on
In one of those debates
When Little England jumps upon
The Navy Estimates.

There Cleophas, of many wiles,
Brought up his little lot,
And Mr. Byles, with wreathéd smiles,
Was deadly on the spot.

And Labby said the bootless pay
Of navies should be stamped on;
'There is no boot!' as strikers say
In Labby's own Northampton.

'Then came a burst of thunder-sound'
That shook the very street,
And lo! MacGregor's form was found
To be upon its feet.

He called the rates a great expense,
He was a peaceful Scot,
And said the talk about 'defense'
Was simply Tommy-rot.

Far better for his country's good,
So long allowed to bleed,
If only half the money could
Be spend across the Tweed.

Then with a petrifying shout,
Like some *clamantis vox*,
He fetched a trumpet note about
The teeth of fighting cocks;

A simile of crew and crew
All ripe for any ruction
(Refer to verses one and two,
Or else the introduction);

A spark might fall from out the sea,
Completely unforeboded,
And then the birds—where would they be?
Why, they would be exploded.

He looked around for some applause
From front or side or rear;
They never said a word, because
They hadn't strength to cheer.

With many an accidental jest
The hearts of men were full,
But O! the thing they liked the best
Was bold MacGregor's bull!

Punch, April 6, 1895.

HOW LONG, O LORD? HOW LONG?

In Calverley's delightful pages
I often chortle at the view
Expressed by that supreme of sages
About a certain cockatoo
Embellished with a regal tuft,
And suitable for being stuffed.

I like the creature's insolent
Ability to recognise
How much his owner's heart was bent
On his immediate demise;
And yet he winked the other eye,
And stolidly refused to die.

There is a strong and quite absurd
Resemblance, as it seems to me,
Between the tricks of Blades's bird
And those of Harcourt's Ministry;
In each we trace a constitution
Inimical to dissolution.

But *à propos* of winged things,
And passing from the cockatoo,
The fancy naturally springs
To what a swan is said to do;
They say, when dying in a ditch,
He sings a hymn at concert pitch.

To grapple with the parallel—
The humour of the passing fowl
Suggests that we may very well
Remark in this stupendous howl

Emitted by the Anti-Clerics
A sort of moribund hysterics.

I know a book by Mr. Barrie,
An early work that should be read
By people who incline to tarry,
Well knowing they are *Better Dead*;
I wish to have a copy sent
To all the present Government.

For as the work that they have done
Was long ago precisely nil,
And since the Session has begun
Is something rather smaller still,
It seems the best they can achieve
Is just to give it up and leave.

What frequently will happen in
The history of any man
Addicted to a course of sin
Applies to them; for nothing can
In all their life—as I'm a prophet—
Become them like the leaving of it.

National Observer, April 6, 1895.

THE UNION OF HEARTS

['To-day we feel, without scarce (*sic*) knowing why, a desire to cheer for Umra Khan; who, amid the rocks and cliffs of Chitral, is giving battle to English regiments.'—*United Ireland.*]

WHEN the legions of Umra are dancing
Well out of the way of the 'Guides,'
And the pick of the Lancers are lancing
Whatever is left of their hides;
When from every available station
The bullets are beating like rain—
He has this consolation
That some of our nation
Are backing his Plan of Campaign,
Umra Khan and his Plan of Campaign.

Though the seas roll gurly between,
There's a party that wears the green,
A brotherly band
That stretches a hand
To the foes of the State and the Queen.

When the Speaker affair was decided,
And Radicals cared not a fig
For the matter of merit, provided
That one of them went for the wig;
When their candidate noticed the grim
Iteration of Healy's refrain,
How delightful for him
To remember that Tim
Was supporting his Plan of Campaign,
The Speakership Plan of Campaign!

When the Leader is sworn to agree to
The sack of the labourer's club,
While neglecting the option to veto
The National Liberal Pub ;
Then O'Brien suggests with a smile
That, so long as they needn't abstain
In a similar style
On the Emerald Isle,
They will vote for his Plan of Campaign,
For Sir William, his Plan of Campaign.

When the chief of the firm of freebooters
Is stalking the Anglican fold,
And conducting his secular looters
In quest of a quarry of gold ;
When he sees that the Church's subjection
Is chiefly Papistical gain—

And the 'National' section
From Roman affection
Are pushing his Plan of Campaign,
The Dissenter, his Plan of Campaign ;—

Then it makes an harmonious scene,
For there is really nothing between
His hand and the hands
Of the party that stands
By the foes of the State and the Queen.

National Observer, April 20, 1895.

A TIED HOUSE

We are sons of the soil where the usquebaugh blooms
And the scent of its fumes
Is as healthy as tar;
And we miss our poteen
In the Saxon shebeen
Where they serve us across the Imperial Bar.

Chorus: For the potion to which we aspire
Is a blending of whisky and fire,
But they've cheapened our cheer
To the smallest of beer,
And we're tied to Sir William's Entire.

We emerged from the sylvan recesses of Blarney,
From Cork and Killarney,
From Louth and Tyrone,
With the ultimate notion
Of passing a motion
For having a House and a Bar of our own.

When they brewed the Dissenters an unction to ease 'em,
We bargained to please 'em
By taking it hot ;
Though the mark of the robber
And brand of the jobber
Were burnt on the barrel and punched on the pot.

When they served a Lawsonian syrup to follow,
We managed to swallow
The nauseous treat ;

Though our veteran gorges
Rebelled at these orgies
And sighed for a sip of the usual, neat.

But the latest of all is a singular brand
For reviving the land
When it comes to the vote ;
It's a popular bribe
That we've got to imbibe
On the principle known as One Party One Throat.

There's a cup that is filling (and still in arrears)
For the Chamber of Peers,
As the wages of sin ;
Which is fruity, no doubt,
But we fail to make out
Where The Nation (that's Us) is supposed to come in.

We have lain pretty low, but the lowliest worm
Is permitted to squirm
On a question of thirst ;
If he can't be supplied
In a House that is tied,
Why, the knot must be severed or something will burst.

Chorus : For the potion to which we aspire
Is a blending of whisky and fire,
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National Observer, May 4, 1895.

'THEY BORE HIM BAREFACED ON THE BIER'

OPHELIA

['Much excitement was produced in the Lobby by Sir William Harcourt's intimation that the present Budget would, in all probability, be his last.'—*Daily Press.*]

O LOYAL friends ! O gallant foes !
O quite a lot of other factions !
This is, as not a creature knows,
The last of all my Budget actions ;
For though I don't propose to run away,
I still refuse to fight another day.

Long since, I had it in my heart
To break this parlous piece of news,

And cause a momentary start
Among the sleepers in their pews ;
For I have felt—of course I may be wrong—
That lately I have not been going strong.

All flesh is grass—or so they say—
And certainly the time must come
When heroes undergo decay,
And even princely lips are dumb ;
We all must ultimately yield our place,
Sooner or later—later in my case.

Nor could I find a fitter hour
In which to shadow forth my fall,
That none may weep my waning power,
Or turn his face toward the wall
(If anybody really wants to sob, he
Will please to go and do it in the Lobby) ;

For while I grasp the Budget Bill,
With swelling chest and chin sublime,
To many friends my posture will
Recall the splendour of my prime ;
And even Envy owns, at such a minute,
That nobody beside myself is in it.

What fitter hour, again, than this
For Erin's sons to learn the cost
Of all that they are like to miss
With yet another Leader lost,
Whose latest joy it is to do a bit
Of Budget-cooking for their benefit ?

For when my ashes shall be cool
They'll think : ' He laughed a little at
Our homely taste for local rule,
But in the end he noticed that

The extra whisky duty gave us pain,
And so he kindly took it off again.'

Then toll for me the passing gong,
And lightly heave my body hence,
And sing me fair Ophelia's song,
And say: 'It truly was immense
To see him settle down, without a tear,
Barefaced, as ever, on the British Beer!'

World, May 8, 1895.

A NATIONAL LIBERAL 'BEANO'

THERE was a noise of revelry by night,
And England's Radicals had gathered there
In all their practically Peerless might;
The Independent Labour Party's hair
Was curled; and Beauty, with her best attire on,
Recalled the *Eve of Waterloo* (by Byron).

Soft eyes were seen to droop, high hearts to bound,
And all went merry as a grig—when hush!
When hark! a deep and soul-seducing sound
Came pealing through the careless, giddy crush;
Was it the trombone, or the supper bell,
Or else the voice of some 'voluptuous swell'?

O mellow organ ! skilled alike to make
The Proletariat glow with speechless glee ;
To keep sublimely and sublimely break
The torpid spell of taciturnity ;
Or haply in the humour of romance
To sound the invitation to the dance !

Is this the voice that lately, sweet and low,
Checked off the profits of the passing year,
And sought with fair persuasiveness to show
The National advantages of Beer,
Implying that it were a cruel shame
To put a Local stopper on the same?

Is this the voice whose sad appealing note
Prognosticated imminent demise,
Much like the swan that tunes his parchèd throat
Almost immediately before he dies?

That now with high elation drowns the dirge
In pæans on the sheer volcano's verge?

The same, but not the same; the scene is changed;
The hour invites to badinage and bluster,
When round him all his own elect are ranged,
Save those, a negligeable few, that muster
Where rival lips—in quite another room—
Defiantly postpone the day of doom.

I would I had been there; by all report
It was a little heaven below to see
The Nonconformist Welsher take his sport
Unfettered, reckless, dissolutely free;
Indeed, I always understood his tone is
A little loose at conversaziones.

But when the leading wags had plied their wit,
The lucubrated jest, the jaunty trope,
And proved the Ministry were nice and fit,
And he, the Leader, full of spring and hope,
O then to see him join the dance, and go
Revolving on the trim elastic toe!

Such are the scenes of bliss without alloy
That captivate the People's throbbing breast,
The episodes of pure domestic joy
That fairly thrill the chaste suburban chest;
The distant province hears the happy hum,
And murmurs—Lo! Millennium is come!

World, May 15, 1895.

A TIED HOUSE

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And the scent of its fumes
Is as healthy as tar;
And we miss our poteen
In the Saxon shebeen
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  In which to shadow forth my fall,
That none may weep my waning power,
  Or turn his face toward the wall
(If anybody really wants to sob, he
Will please to go and do it in the Lobby) ;

'BIRTH'S INVIDIOUS BAR'

AIR—*Lady Clare*

IT was the time when Budgets blow,
And talk of Beer was in the air;
Lord Wolmer sat him in a row
Behind the back of Labouchere.

I trow the latter saw his chance,
Your Radical, you may be sure,
Is ever eager to advance
The claims of Primogeniture.

He noticed—if report was true—
A noble Earl of high degree
Established in a common pew
In ordinary company,

The Earl in question, closely pressed
About his name and natal star,
Somewhat denied, somewhat confessed,
And gently bowing crossed the Bar.

Up came the Leader on the spot,
He wished to make the matter clear,
Either his honoured friend was not,
Or else he was, a Belted Peer.

The thing could soon be worried out,
Meanwhile the claimant might receive
The benefit of any doubt,
And, so to put it, take his leave.

It never was permitted by
  The rules of reason or of rhyme
For any man to occupy
  Two several places at a time.

No one could simply say, 'I please
  To sit in both;' it wouldn't do;
Although a Member, if obese,
  Might cover ground enough for two.

And similarly, though a man
  At times might run to double chins,
No decent Æthiopian
  Had ever worn a brace of skins.

'Nay now,' said Mr. Chamberlain,
  'To sit or not to sit: this is
The weary question once again
  Of Peerage disabilities.'

'Nay now, what question?' said the Chair,
'What motion? nay, I know of none.'
The Chief assumed his martial air;
'You want a motion? here is one:—

'The noble lord is bound to sit
Elsewhere by virtue of his status;
I move the making of a writ
To rectify the rude hiatus.

'Who dares oppose himself to me
Is ill-advised; his words are light.'
'Nay now,' that other said, 'but see,
You show a naughty, naughty spite.

'Until he prove his right of race,
According to your own admission
The Earl is beltless, and his case
Is merely one of grave suspicion.'

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Might cover ground enough for two.

And similarly, though a man
At times might run to double chins,
No decent Æthiopian
Had ever worn a brace of skins.

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'To sit or not to sit: this is
The weary question once again
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'The noble lord is bound to sit
Elsewhere by virtue of his status;
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Is ill-advised; his words are light.'
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You show a naughty, naughty spite.

'Until he prove his right of race,
According to your own admission
The Earl is beltless, and his case
Is merely one of grave suspicion.'

The Leader's logic grew severe
And exquisitely pertinent—
'If he aspires to be a Peer,
But not a Lord of Parliament—

'If he aspires to be a Peer
But claims to sit within the Bar,
Where are we? Neither there nor here,
In fact, we dunno where we are!'

National Observer, May 18, 1895.

A LAMENT FOR THE MACGREGOR

HE's gane ! he's gane ! he's frae us torn,
The brawest billie e'er was born ;
Mourn, feckless Caledonia ! mourn,
Ye Whigs an' a' !
Macgregor's left the Hous' forlorn,
Rob Roy's ava' !

Ye buckies by the braes o' Ness,
When ye obsairve the Tory press
Sae fu' o' glee, wi' dour distress
Your wames mun ache ;
We're in an awfu' sickly mess,
An' nae mistake !

'BIRTH'S INVIDIOUS BAR'

AIR—*Lady Clare*

IT was the time when Budgets blow,
And talk of Beer was in the air;
Lord Wolmer sat him in a row
Behind the back of Labouchere.

I trow the latter saw his chance,
Your Radical, you may be sure,
Is ever eager to advance
The claims of Primogeniture.

He noticed—if report was true—
A noble Earl of high degree
Established in a common pew
In ordinary company,

The Earl in question, closely pressed
About his name and natal star,
Somewhat denied, somewhat confessed,
And gently bowing crossed the Bar.

Up came the Leader on the spot,
He wished to make the matter clear,
Either his honoured friend was not,
Or else he was, a Belted Peer.

The thing could soon be worried out,
Meanwhile the claimant might receive
The benefit of any doubt,
And, so to put it, take his leave.

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Meanwhile the claimant might receive
The benefit of any doubt,
And, so to put it, take his leave.

It never was permitted by
The rules of reason or of rhyme
For any man to occupy
Two several places at a time.

No one could simply say, 'I please
To sit in both;' it wouldn't do;
Although a Member, if obese,
Might cover ground enough for two.

And similarly, though a man
At times might run to double chins,
No decent Æthiopian
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Our chiel was aye a shinin' licht,
An' when he spak wi' a' his micht
The Hous' wad keckle at the sicht,
An' brust wi' laughter ;
The timmers shuk ae blessed nicht
Frae floor to rafter !

That nicht he rose in fechtin' mood
Ahint the Chieftain's fearfu' brood,
An' hitcht his sporan up an' stood
An' straikt his kilt,
An' ilka body thocht that bluid
Wad soon be spilt.

'Is there,' said he, 'ae canny Scot
But feels his marrow meltin' hot

To see the Crofters gae to pot
An' pure perdeetion
A' thro' the blazin' Tammy-rot
O' yon Commeesion?

'I'd hae ye ken I stand at bay!
Noo will ye gie the clans a day?'
Auld Willie winked—'I canna say;
I sairly doot it;
Gin I were you I wadna lay
Lang odds aboot it.'

Macgregor snuffed the air a wee,
An' tuk an aith to do or dee,
Then oot he spak wi' gleamin' e'e
An' gloomin' braw—
'It isna gude enough for me!'
An' walked awa'.

Emancipated from the heavy task
Of really doing nothing all the while,
The House with one consent proceeds to bask
And smile.

One common jubilee corrects their spleen,
One touch of Nature unifies the lot,
And any trifling difference is clean
Forgot.

Together as they plough the driven sand,
Securely bunkered on the breezy links,
An augur sees a rival augur, and
He winks.

The weaned infant and the cocatrice
Fracture their bulgers on the self-same tee;
Such harmony is very, very nice
To see.

Homesick and heartsick, to its proper lair
The slighted, blighted band of Erin sails ;
The Welshers, on the other hand, repair
To Wales.

And Weir's awa' with all his kilted crew
To greet MacGregor on his native heath,
And rouse the rebel clans, and arm 'em to
The teeth.

The Chief, in some New Forest glade reclined,
Extemporises immemorial jokes,
Or quaintly carves them on the listening rind
Of oaks.

And courtly Cleophas takes heart of grace
To think the People own at least a Peer
Who anyhow can win one Derby race
A year.

God bless the happy creatures ! As for me,
Why dwell, I say, upon the paltry past ?
This little holiday is like to be
Their last.

World, June 5, 1895.

FAREWELL TO CORK

Now toll the temporary bell
For W. O'Brien's knell ;
I come, in fact, to say farewell,
O Cork !

Politically, as you know,
I've grappled with our common foe ;
Now Chance has been and laid me low,
O Cork !

I've sat, a hunted thing, in ditches ;
I've served a spell in prison, which is
A place where people steal your breeches,
O Cork !

I said, 'No matter ! let 'em take
My trousers for my country's sake,
Bare legs do not a prison make,'
O Cork !

Then, ere I won the light of day,
An enemy had smirched with clay
Another part of my array,
O Cork !

That garment which I never fail
On any lightest hint to trail—
A Peer had trodden on its tail,
O Cork !

I flung my gage ; without a fear
For any costs, however dear,
I battled with the bloated Peer,
O Cork !

But ah ! it was a brother Celt
That planted bruisers on my pelt,
And hit me underneath the belt,
O Cork !

My own familiar friend who laid
His hand in mine and offered aid,
And wanted, later, to be paid,
O Cork !

A son of Erin ! shame, I say ;
He might have known before to-day
That Erin's patriots *never pay*,
O Cork !

I wonder how he had the face
To thus defy, to thus disgrace
The high traditions of his race,
O Cork !

He'll question next the League's intent,
And hint that money might be spent
From time to time in paying rent !
O Cork !

How could he let his fellow-man,
Who preached with him the pious Plan,
Lie stricken like a pelican,
(O Cork !)

That welters in the waste alone,
A shaft embedded in his bone,
Whose feathers were his very own ?
O Cork !

Enough ! it makes me deadly sick ;
And there's the *Irish Catholic*
Engaged in heaving half a brick,
O Cork !

I'll tell Timotheus what I mean
When once we meet on College Green
With new shillelaghs, nice and clean,
O Cork !

Meanwhile it might be just as well
To toll the temporary bell
For W. O'Brien's knell,
O Cork !

National Observer, June 15, 1895.

WE ARE MINUS SEVEN

A GOVERNMENT, dear Editor,
That drew so scant a breath
Would seem to be intended for
A rather early death.

I met a stickit Ministry,
It was but three years old,
Already on its brow were sprent
Grey hairs among the gold.

Its health, I thought, was far from good,
Its weight exceeding light ;
I greatly wondered how it could
Have sat so very tight.

'Your surplus voters, free or paid—
How many may you be?'
'We reckon seven in all,' it said,
And slowly winked at me.

'A sorry margin,' I replied,
'It surely has decreased ;
I quite supposed that you relied
On forty odd, at least.'

'O ! half a pair has gone away
To Kiel, across the sea ;
And some have joined, we grieve to say,
The great minority.

'The Parnellites have snapped the link,
Macgregor's o'er the Border,
And one is shaky on the drink,
And Gully's keeping order.

'And round the churchyards one in ten
Tunes up his private organ,
And Osborne Morgan now and then
Dissents from Osborne Morgan.

'For one the widowed Cork's lament
Is daily growing louder,
And one has lately had his tent
Blown up with smokeless powder.

'And one, among the first to go,
A Whip of gentle cords—
He left us sorrowing below,
And mounted to the Lords.

'And often, Sir, when all was blue,
And work was in arrears,
For want of better things to do,
We sat and cursed the Peers.

'We sat and planted Bill on Bill,
We stuck, and wouldn't stir,
And every evening things were still
Precisely what they were.

'We ploughed the ocean's sandy bed,
We filled the foaming cup,
Or knocked a statue on the head
Before we put it up.

'At last there came a deadly rot;
Beneath a blazing heaven
We lost our little racing lot,
And trickled down to seven!

'Who would have thought that Ascot week
Should prove our dissolution—
The straw that shattered, so to speak,
The camel's constitution?'

'But still, with seven braves,' I said,
'A deal may yet be done;
Your Derby chief, as I have read,
Would be content with *one!*'

'O! we could do a deal or two
With seven,' it replied;
'The only thing that troubles us
Is this—it isn't on the plus,
But on the minus side.'

World, June 26, 1895.

IN ROSEBERII MEMORIAM

(The Old Man epilogises in the Miltonic manner)

YET once more, O my Party, yea, once more
(This time with health as hardy as a rock
Through my excursus to a foreign shore),
I seek you as a mother seeks her flock
And finds the pretty creatures plucked and bare.
Bitter occasion and a shattered pair
Compel me thus above an honoured bier
To perpetrate the unaccustomed rhyme ;
For Rosebery is gone, gone ere his prime,
Poor Rosebery, and never hurt a Peer !

We two were nursed upon the selfsame hills,
And fed the selfsame foolish bounding sheep,
Though he has never known the care that kills
The lowly commoner ; nor sighed for sleep
What time Sir William wound his sultry horn,
Or rash Alpheus rolled his turgid stream
Battening upon the dews of early morn ;
Or pompous Ughtred argued his supreme
Enlightenment on matters of the main ;
Nor would the Irish pipes omit to moan,
Tempered to the Scottish screel,
Nor braw MacGregor leave his local reel,
Nor Tanner cease from motions all his own ;
Nor from the wake would Tim be absent long,
He often would oblige us with a song.

But O the heavy change now thou art gone !
Now thou art gone and fairly in thy urn
And not at present likely to return !

As killing as the pace of Isinglass
(*Emeritus* and gathered to his stud),
So shows the canker-worm that nipped, alas!
Our Primrose in the bud.

What fittest bard shall frame thy benison?
Shall doubting Thomas at a venture tune
The Cambrian harp, or Allen loose his lays,
Or flippant Labouchere
With that divinely supercilious air
Assuage the pestilential heat of June
By damning thee with faint and frigid praise?

Where were ye, traitors, when the Tory's teeth
Closed o'er the open throat of Rosebery?
For either ye were plunging on the Heath,
Where he hath often sported, free from care,
Or munching unaware
The toothsome shrimp with your domestic tea.

Ah me! what boots it with incessant zeal
To ply the paltry politician's trade,
And strictly educate a thankless land?
Were it not better far, as I have done,
To chuck the thing betimes and leave the sun,
And toy with high old Homer in the shade,
Or trip with Currie's little lot to Kiel,
Or do, like thee, the double Derby trick?
Far better this than thus to simply stick
And plough the unremunerative sand.

O fount of Local Veto's stream! O pump
Of Lawson's limpid-lapsing eloquence!
Not thine it was to sink that sacred Rump,
Although I freely ween
That with a little luck it might have been.

Nay, nay, it was the Opposition's low
And fatal lust for national defence
That dealt the irremediable blow,
I know.

But see the mourners at the coffin's edge,
Each shepherd with his own peculiar bill,
Good honest John with literary quill,
And shamrock, out of season, at his breast,
Weeping—'Ah, who hath reft my dearest pledge?'
And there with duplicated grief oppressed
The rudely disestablished Asquith mopes,
A steeple-hat upon his drooping crest,
And wails with double pipe because of twins.
A little for his registration hopes,
But most he sorrows for his country's sins,
That they, the pastors that defend the fold,
Should leave the single-hearted wolf without
To famish in the cold.

But check, my shepherds, check the mournful rout ;
For Rosebery is not precisely gone :
He still remains the Genius of the Turf ;
And this is but a temporary change.
In my comparatively varied range
I too have tossed on Fortune's fickle surf ;
And I have also known
Opinions rudely veer in many a man ;
For instance, I was once Gladstonian.

So sang the hoary swain and bade adieu ;
To-morrow to fresh themes and pamphlets new.

National Observer, June 29, 1895.

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